

Medicines

Some medicines contain lactose, including

- prescription medicines, such as birth control pills
- over-the-counter medicines, such as products to treat stomach acid and gas

These medicines most often cause symptoms in people with severe lactose intolerance. If you have lactose intolerance, ask your doctor if your medicines contain lactose.

Points to Remember

- Lactose is a sugar found in milk and milk products.
- Lactose intolerance means you have symptoms such as bloating, diarrhea, and gas after you have milk or milk products.
- Your doctor will try to find out if you have lactose intolerance with a medical, family, and diet history; a physical exam; and medical tests.
- Most people with lactose intolerance can eat or drink some lactose without symptoms.
- If you have lactose intolerance, you can make changes to what you eat and drink. Some people may only need to have less lactose. Others may need to avoid lactose altogether.

- Talk with your doctor about how to get enough nutrients—including calcium and vitamin D—in your diet or your child’s diet. Ask if you should also take a supplement to get enough calcium and vitamin D. For safety reasons, talk with your doctor before using dietary supplements or any other nonmainstream medicine together with or in place of the treatment your doctor prescribes.
- Lactose is in many food products and in some medicines.

Hope through Research

The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases’ (NIDDK’s) Division of Digestive Diseases and Nutrition conducts and supports basic and clinical research into digestive disorders such as lactose intolerance.

Clinical trials are research studies involving people. Clinical trials look at safe and effective new ways to prevent, detect, or treat disease. Researchers also use clinical trials to look at other aspects of care, such as improving the quality of life for people with chronic illnesses. To learn more about clinical trials, why they matter, and how to participate, visit the NIH Clinical Research Trials and You website at www.nih.gov/health/clinicaltrials. For information about current studies, visit www.ClinicalTrials.gov.